

REMARKS

Claims 20, 23 and 26-40 are pending herein. By this Amendment, claims 1-15, 19, 21, 22, 24 and 25 are canceled, claims 20 and 23 are amended to be independent claims by including claims 1 and 15 therein, respectively, and claims 27-40 are added.

No new matter is added by this Amendment. New claims 27-40 correspond to prior claims 2-14 and 19, respectively.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments merely make allowable dependent claims independent); (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication in the Office Action that claims 20 and 23 contain allowable subject matter and that claim 26 is allowed.

By this Amendment, claims 20 and 23 have been amended to be in independent form, and thus should be in condition for allowance.

Also by this Amendment, claims 27-40 depending, directly or indirectly, from claim 26 are added. As claim 26 is allowed, these dependent claims should also be allowed.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-15, 19, 21, 22, 24 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) relying upon U.S. Patent No. 6,361,879 (Tsutsumi) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,555,602 (Harada). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

By this Amendment, claims 1-15, 19, 21, 22, 24 and 25 have been canceled.

Accordingly, this rejection is moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

As discussed above, all rejected claims have been canceled, and all of the remaining claims 20, 23 and 26-40 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 20, 23 and 26-40 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: February 11, 2005

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